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ABSTRACT

This guide to being an effective adviser for school clubs begins with an essay explaining the philosophy of school club advisership. It describes the adviser's role as a leader and as a teacher of leadership. Subsequent chapters discuss the following guidelines: (1) club advisers should be aware of the time needed to support and encourage student members of a group; (2) club officers should have a clear vision of their duties and responsibilities, which is best established through leadership training; (3) clubs function better when they have a written constitution outlining the club's purpose, structure, election procedures, and organization; (4) the adviser sets the tone of club meetings and can help to ensure success by training the executive officers to consider the following elements in meetings: agendas, handouts, fun, order, recognition of outstanding members, role of officers and adviser during the meeting, and meeting evaluation; (5) a systematic approach to recruiting and keeping members is needed, which may include such membership-building ideas as distributing bookmarks advertising the club or holding "bring-a-guest" meetings; (6) carefully planning club activities and developing an effective planning system are important; and (7) clubs that work to gain and maintain administrative and teacher support fare better. An 18-item bibliography concludes the guide. (JDD)

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How To Be a Club Adviser

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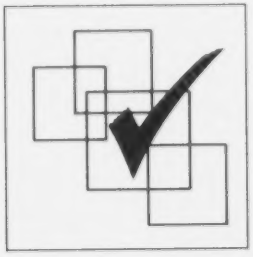

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PREFACE

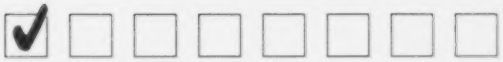
I have been teaching for more than 20 years; I began my career on Long Island in New York and continued for the past 15 years in Las Vegas, Nev. In that time, I have advised many student groups including pep club, soccer bunnies, varsity quiz, Helping You Helping Me, Laubach Literacy, and KEY Club. My experience, therefore, has reached into many diverse areas—sports, academics, education, and service.

The KEY Club organization is the one I have worked with the longest and it thus constitutes the majority of my experience. Today, as regional administrator, I monitor and supervise 11 KEY Clubs and 6 Builders Clubs. I also train student leaders and advisers for each KEY Club. In addition, I work with students, teachers, administrators, and Kiwanis Clubs in chartering new clubs in the area. Currently, I am helping build five new KEY Clubs and at least three new Builders Clubs.

I should mention that none of what I do is paid employment; I do it as a volunteer. This includes expenditures of time, energy, and money, which are all justified by the joys of advisership. I fully believe that to be a complete teacher, each teacher needs to be an adviser. It is a most important role, since learning takes place continuously; students do not cease to learn when they leave the classroom. So, too, teachers should not cease to teach when students leave the classroom. Educators should be teaching the whole student, the well-rounded student, the student able to leave that school with sound moral character, high self-esteem, social awareness, self-confidence, and the ability to communicate effectively. The teacher as club adviser can help make these ideals realities.

This is my philosophy of why classroom teachers should advise school clubs. Philosophies are important. I think that people frequently undertake jobs without fully examining what they think about those jobs—their functions, importance, ramifications, goals. For this reason, I have started *How To Be a Club Adviser* with a rather formal essay explaining the philosophy of school club advisership. It includes some personal experience, some research, and some advice, all of which are required for an understanding of the role of the club adviser. It is a good place to start because it is a necessary place to start. After one begins by formulating such a philosophy, one can only end by achieving success.

CHAPTER



The Adviser as Teacher

TO ADVISE: to recommend a course of action

ADVISER: a teacher who helps students to plan their work

TO TEACH: to give instruction to, to train; to give to another (knowledge or skill which one has oneself) . . . ; to cause to understand.

These dictionary definitions show us that the role of teacher and adviser are closely related. Indeed, it is impossible to separate the two, for both positions concern themselves with the welfare of the individual being taught or advised; and both are concerned with giving guidance. Still, club advisers sometimes forget that they are teachers, too. They sometimes fail to fully comprehend the meaning of "advise" and view their role as dictator and persuader. To avoid such misguidance, club advisers must understand they are operating within a school, whose primary function is to educate. Advisers *are* teachers. Just as classroom teachers must have expertise in particular subject areas, advisers must have a knowledge base in the leadership skills required to successfully run club functions. This, unfortunately, is often an unjustified assumption rather than a reality—no matter how logical the concept.

Teachers and advisers must possess leadership skills. After all, they function as leaders, as well as teachers of leadership. You cannot teach what you do not know. Understanding that, you may ask,

What is leadership, exactly? How do you use leadership skills? What are the ultimate goals of exercising these skills? What knowledge base, specifically, does the teacher need to have to function successfully as an adviser?

Leadership is "the exercise of influence" (Cunningham, 1985, p. 17). Within the scope of that influence are several common factors. A review of current articles and research data concerning leadership, reveals words such as dedication, commitment, enthusiasm, and creativity. These are applied equally to skills in both the educational and management arenas, for leadership skills do indeed have multiple applications. As indicated by James Skidmore in *USA Today* (Nov. 1989, p. 80), good leaders have "clear vision." Applied to the club scenario, this means that the adviser's expertise exists in the fact that he or she knows the purpose, structure, and goals of the student organization. If the club is one dedicated to community service, for example, such as KEY Club, then the educational leader, in the person of the adviser, must be aware of the needs in the community that are to be met, the exact nature of the aid that is required, and meaningful ways in which club members can contribute their time and energy within the parameters of individual school district dictates, parental permission, and time constraints. The adviser, therefore, anticipates the outcome of a project as well as the obstacles along the way.

Advisers gently help student leaders find their direction. One adviser said it best, "An adviser should advise, not control. The students are supposed to do the activity. The adviser should give hints and encouragement." This is the role of the teacher, as well—to encourage. A teacher wants students who think for themselves, students who are logical, fair, moral, and ethical decision makers, students who process information wisely and analyze the various applications of that information, all of which is achieved through guidance and encouragement.

In her book *How To Start a Leadership Class*, Linda Teague Rogers emphasizes "Advisers should have the courage to offer advice only when asked, and then allow students to either succeed or fail on their own. Students must learn to cope with failure. Adults do them a disservice if they always take over to prevent failure from occurring" (Rogers, 1991, p. 34). Part of the adviser's vision, then, is the knowledge that failure is part of the educational process after which no chastisement occurs, merely the gentle encouragement to find the path to success by other means, many of which the adviser/

teacher has on hand to offer as choices. This includes providing guidance, not direction, as an adviser, not a director. "An adviser gives guidelines or suggestions as to how things can be more efficient; a director tells them [the students] what to do" (LeBlanc, 1992). While student leaders are learning to lead, advisers are teaching to lead. There is no workable way the adviser can be divorced from the teacher.

Fundamental values can and should be modeled by the adviser, just as they are modeled in the classroom by the teacher. The adviser can voice concerns about the realistic nature of the student leaders' or club members' goals, for most educators agree that the setting of unreachable or undesirable goals is self-defeating due to frustration and diminishing self-esteem. It is the adviser's job to inform students about their limitations—school rules, laws, budget, and personnel—and why those limitations exist. Student leaders should be told why an idea would be "nixed" by the school administration, or why the community's civil laws that inhibit a desired activity have been enacted. The knowledge of the club adviser must be broad-based, indeed.

As a model, the adviser must also ensure that his or her group "values individuality and diversity, as well as unity" (*Moral Education*, 1988, p. 31). This is fair, just, moral, and ethical. The adviser works for the success of the club, and should emphasize the importance of group goals, not the desires of individuals. "Leading involves getting EVERYONE to pursue a shared mission" (Cunningham, 1985, p. 20). Individual club members, however, must be given the opportunity to express with equal time and force their views. Discussion does not mean rebellion; it is merely the expression of a democratic principle. If, for example, some band members say they want to sponsor a car wash to raise money for new uniforms, and other members say they would prefer doing a series of bake sales, both suggestions should be given equal time, free of negative remarks, to explain the reasons for each suggestion. Ultimately, the vote of the majority will determine the fundraiser to be held.

When the adviser ensures that democratic practices take place in meetings, and limits his or her role in the decision-making process, the adviser "quickly discovers an amazing amount of good sense, logic, and fair play in students who have a chance to decide among themselves issues they have selected as important" (Rogers, 1991, p. 33). That way, the adviser demonstrates "skills for moral living" (*Moral Education*, 1988, p. 29), which include disagreeing respect-

fully, problem solving, empathy development, and choosing wisely. The Piaget principle, "children learn continuously, and learn exactly what is demonstrated to them" (Smith, 1988, p. 109), is in effect during club meetings just as strongly as it is during classroom lessons.

One thing effective leaders and teachers have in common is flexibility. Advisers should "not be afraid to take risks and make changes" (Skidmore, 1988, p. 80). More exactly, the adviser should allow members to take risks and guide them in the risk-taking process. The old adage, "You won't know until you try," is important here, and the concept behind it should be encouraged. No matter how difficult it is to hold back doubts and reservations, the adviser must do just that. Advisers should think of risks as opportunities to teach. Students may fail, but a good adviser turns those times into learning situations. "If they are successful, praise them; if they fail, advise them" (McGallian, 1992). In a failing situation, students don't need to be admonished. They need direction to understand the cause of their failure and the encouragement to try a different tack.

Just as in the classroom, advisers must be supportive, be dependable as a resource, and give guidance as a counselor. Students must be encouraged to make the required phone calls, write the needed letters, consult the right authorities. If they shrink from these duties and expect the adviser to do the work, they are not being trained as leaders. The adviser is the student leader's source of information and inspiration. Advisers teach specific skills, observe sponsored events, and help students analyze the results of those events. Advisers must be willing to help students on projects when they have self-doubts about their leadership abilities. The insecurity of youth is a factor here, and the adviser must be ready to offer the support of experience. The goal for the adviser, then, is to achieve in the student a sense of pride, accomplishment, and positive self-esteem.

This leads directly to an examination of the list of skills the adviser is actually teaching:

- group dynamics
- teamwork
- public speaking
- listening
- organization
- diplomacy
- patience

- trust
- parliamentary procedure
- ethical judgment
- logic
- cause and effect.

Advisers should view teaching leadership skills as a teacher would—thinking in terms of lesson plans, asking, "What activity can I suggest as a means of ensuring these students will learn whichever of these skills is necessary for success?" Ice-breakers are a great way to teach a specific skill, such as listening or teamwork. This sounds a great deal like classroom participation, which it is. If leaders need to know their purpose and goals, the same is true for the teacher of a particular topic. Lesson plans require concrete objectives. The teacher asks, "What do I want my students to learn from this lesson?" The adviser must ask, "What do I want my student leaders to learn from this experience?" The teacher and adviser are one and the same when club experiences are viewed as learning opportunities. Only the adviser who uses teaching techniques can provide a true learning environment, one in which the students feel free to learn experientially.

On the other hand, the adviser may need to teach in a way different from that of the classroom teacher. For the adviser, "it's more spontaneous" (Quincy, 1992). Teachers have notes and know where the lesson is leading. Advisers do not know this. They must act on the moment. During club meetings, therefore, the adviser must be attentive and aware of the events unfolding and the interactive dynamics of the students involved. This is not a time to grade papers, update attendance, or complete correspondence. The adviser must be as attuned to the club meeting as is the teacher conducting a class.

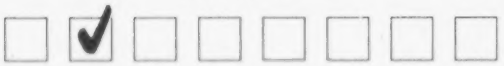
When examining various circumstances of leadership in education, James Coleman, Thomas Hoffer, and Sally Kilgore found that "the conditions of educational success were discipline (physical and intellectual), high expectations and standards (for both teachers and students), and a safe and orderly school environment" (Doyle and Hartie, 1985, p. 23). Like the teacher, then, the adviser is also a disciplinarian. Here, too, positive discipline is taught by example. Restraint and self-control provoke orderliness, which is a necessary condition of democracy. When the club adviser maintains a confident demeanor and projects a positive attitude, when the adviser

listens actively, smiles encouragement, and offers soft-spoken advice only when asked, the group reacts with respect and dignity.

"The job of the adviser is to teach by example, lead with wisdom, and inspire with enthusiasm" (Rogers, 1991, p. 32). The adviser is inseparable from the teacher. In both instances, they serve as role models. Into this realm comes all sorts of considerations—dress, demeanor, behavior, temperament, and professionalism. The most important of these is formulating an accurate view of the dual role of teachers as advisers.

The classroom teacher's success is measured by how much his or her students learn. The same is true for the success of the club adviser.

CHAPTER



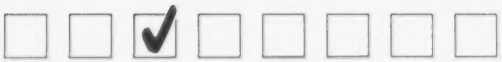
A Brief Note About Time

When I was younger, I thought that what I wanted most in life was money. When I grew less young, I thought I wanted more possessions. Now that I am even less young, I realize how foolish the young can be. Now I *know* that what I want more of in life is TIME. This is the most precious of all possessions. Therefore, I do not give it away easily. I carefully select those people, places, and activities to which I desire to give my time, fully realizing that once it is given, it cannot be taken back. This realization is absolutely necessary to the individual becoming a club adviser.

There is no doubt that the expectations of the club adviser are many, and the one least mentioned by the recruiter of advisers is the time commitment. The effective, successful club adviser must be willing and able to put forth extra effort. This is true whether the advisership is a paid position or a volunteer position. The commitment for the latter case, however, is all the more necessary since the incentives are different. In either case, the rewards are great—as any teacher knows. Successful students/leaders/group members are trophy enough.

The club adviser should, however, be aware of the time needed to support and encourage student members of a group. This means knowing the number of students involved, the exact nature of the organization (its origins, history, network), the types of projects to be undertaken, the frequency and length of meetings, and the organizational structure and hierarchy *before* committing to the adviser position. A commitment is a promise, and broken promises impede education and the development of sound character. The true adviser likes young people, not just in the classroom, but also beyond it. When asked what he wants in an adviser, one student said, "I want someone who is there for me."

CHAPTER



The Officers

It is imperative that each officer begin the club year with a clear vision of the duties and responsibilities of the position. Without this, the student may experience frustration and confusion leading to inaction, rendering that student leader ineffective.

Clear vision is established by sound leadership training. Remember, students elected to office do not necessarily know what is expected of them or how to perform the duties to which they have agreed. They must be taught. This can be done simply if the club adviser heeds two principles:

1. Officer training sessions should offer only the basics.
2. Like advisers, students learn as they go.

It is a good suggestion for the adviser to provide a leadership folder or notebook for each student leader, which would include:

1. Outline of position responsibilities
2. Club constitution
3. Parliamentary procedure guidelines
4. Agenda format
5. School mandates
6. List of tips for effective communication.

It is generally agreed that each club should have as its officers a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

Here is a general outline of the duties of most executive officers.

President:

Presides over board meetings and general membership meetings, prepares agenda for each meeting, ensures order through

the use of parliamentary procedure, establishes committees as needed, monitors the status and follow through of all committee work.

Vice President:

Take over presidential duties when the president is unable to do so. Serves in any capacity the president assigns.

Secretary:

Records minutes at board and general meetings, presents minutes for approval at each meeting, keeps club attendance and project records, handles club correspondence in a timely fashion.

Treasurer:

Collects and banks monies collected, maintains an accurate record of club finances, presents records for approval at board and general meetings.

Perhaps the most nebulous position is that of vice president. For this reason, this student should have one or more specified jobs such as public relations (press releases, school announcements, posters, bulletins), or serve as the committee coordinator (taking reports from each of club's committees and presenting them to the club at large). The vice president could even serve as historian, if the club maintains a scrapbook. The important point is, the vice president should have specific tasks to perform so he or she knows what is expected and feels a vital part of the club's leadership.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Should parliamentary procedure be used? Yes! This does not mean, however, that an adviser should demand students run their meetings using a stiff, inflexible format. The *basics* of parliamentary procedure can be used easily and effectively.

1. Formal call to order
2. Roll call
3. Reading of minutes
4. Treasurer's report
5. Committee reports
6. Old business
7. New business

8. Making and seconding motions
9. Discussion
10. Call for questions
11. Voice vote
12. Adjournment

Little more is needed, except for the president to make sure only one person speaks at a time. If any further elements of parliamentary procedure are desired, then they can be implemented according to an official edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* (which advisers should have on hand).

Other tips for effective meetings include:

- **Attendance.** It is vital for officers and the adviser to attend all meetings since both serve as role models.
- **Preparation.** Student leaders should be able to anticipate questions from club members, such as those involving time, place, cost, and purpose.

  The president should have a printed agenda for each member. Times, addresses, and other pertinent information should be included.
- **Listening.** All leaders and members of the club should be encouraged to develop active listening skills. Restate what someone has said so that assumptions do not take the place of understanding.
- **Parliamentary Procedure.** Whatever elements are used should be used regularly and consistently.
- **Summarization.** At the end of the meeting, student leaders should review the main points covered as well as deadlines, dates, addresses, and assignments.
- **Debriefing.** The adviser should meet briefly with the club officers at the end of each general meeting to review that meeting's effectiveness. Weak points can be identified and strengthened next time, and strong points can be identified and maintained.
- **Follow Through.** An officer-adviser network can be used between meeting dates to ensure that all necessary tasks are being performed properly and on time. It is convenient to have a mailbox for each club officer where they and the adviser can leave messages and information for each other.
- **Committees.** Committees ensure that all members of the club are *actively* involved in the operation of the club as well as

ensure that the officers are not overburdened. It is also a good idea for each of the officers to hold a subordinate position on a committee so they see things from the perspective of members. After all, the officer *is* also a member of the club.

COMMITMENT

The big "C." The frustration provoker. The problem-solving tester. The greatest dilemma of them all! Getting club officers to do what they say they will do can be difficult. The simplest solution is twofold: an adviser who actively demonstrates commitment, and officers who understand early in the year that the adviser expects them to be committed. If they fail to honor their commitment, give them a chance to change. A one-on-one conference with the offender, held with a tone of friendly helpfulness, to point out the problems the uncommitted behavior has caused should suffice. This is one of those times when the adviser is called upon to teach ethical behavior. Officers who continue to disregard commitments may need to be removed from office.

CHAPTER

The Club Constitution

Clubs function better when they have a written constitution. Constitutions provide structure, legitimacy, and accountability.

An adviser starting a new club should look at other constitutions of established on-campus clubs. The person in charge of student activities should have on file all school club constitutions readily available to inspection.

The constitution pitfall is making this official document too cumbersome, unintelligible, and restrictive. Beware using jargon and complex sentences. Also, do not include those aspects of the club likely to change frequently or which are subject to variable conditions (student enrollment, building accessibility, and so on).

Good constitutions contain the same basic information that outline the club's purpose, structure, election procedures, and organization.

OUTLINE OF A TYPICAL CLUB CONSTITUTION

CONSTITUTION OF THE _____ CLUB

OF

_____

(Name of School)

ARTICLE I: Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be _____

_____

ARTICLE II: Objectives and Activities

Section 1: The objectives of this organization shall be

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Section 2: The activities of this organization shall be in accord with its objectives.

ARTICLE III: Membership

Section 1: Membership shall be limited to those students in grades _____ .

Section 2: Membership shall include only those students specified in Section 1 who hold a G.P.A. of ____ for the school semester immediately before enrollment in the club.

Section 3: Membership shall be equally apportioned from the grades indicated in Section 1.

[The sections for ARTICLE III will vary according to the particular circumstances of each club.]

ARTICLE IV: Officers

Section 1: Officer positions for this organization shall include

_____

_____ .

They shall serve for one year or until their successors are elected and qualify.

Section 2: Each officer shall be a member in good standing.

Section 3: There shall be a Board of Directors, composed of the officers named in Section 1 and _____ .

[Usually, the other members of the Board of Directors are positions drawn from each class (Senior Class Representative, for example) to provide an equal voice, as well as "peripheral" positions such as Club Historian, Newsletter Editor, or Sergeant-at-Arms.]

ARTICLE V: Election of Officers

Section 1: Election of new officers shall be conducted at a meeting during the month of _____ .

Section 2: Election of new directors shall be held at the second general membership meeting following the opening of school in the fall.

Section 3: All elections shall be held by secret ballot.

Section 4: A simple majority vote will constitute an election to office.

ARTICLE VI: Meetings

Section 1: The club shall hold regular weekly [or monthly or bimonthly] meetings at such time and place as shall be determined by the club with the approval of the school administration.

ARTICLE VII: Amendments

Section 1: Amendments to this constitution shall be adopted by two-thirds vote of the members present at a regular membership meeting held as the next immediate meeting after one at which the proposed amendment was published either by being read or by its distribution in writing.

REVISING A CONSTITUTION

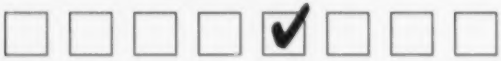
If a constitution is already on file for an existing club, it may need revision. Many are placed in the school's file and not read for years

despite drastic changes in the school and the club—changes that were never constitutionally recorded. Such changes are illegal, so a complete overhaul may be necessary to ensure the club is functioning legally. This also serves as a model of government to the students in the club. The adviser should never forget his or her role as teacher, even in this instance.

To revise a club constitution, set up a Constitutional Committee within the student membership of the club. This teaches students how to collaborate, delegate, and accept responsibility. The chairperson acts as spokesperson for the committee and maintains order, while the secretary records all proposals and suggestions. Since it is the adviser of the club who is ultimately responsible to the administration, he or she should decide the deadline date for completing constitutional revisions. The revised constitution should be presented first to the adviser, who would later review it with the appropriate administrator. Further revisions can be made then, or the constitution can be accepted as is.

Approving constitutions varies from school to school. The administration may allow the freedom to have the club membership vote to accept the revisions, or it may dictate that the revised document is the only one allowed. In either case, it is important that every member is given a copy of the constitution. This avoids problems of information and procedure in the future. Also, since constitutions are matters of public record, it is only fair that members have equal opportunity to understand the rules by which their organization must function. This is also a wonderful way of ensuring that the non-officer members of the club feel vital to the club.

CHAPTER



Meetings

Meetings are the soul of a club. Ineffective meetings can destroy the spirit of its members, while effective meetings encourage club members to soar to new heights. It is up to the adviser to set the tone of the meetings by training the executive officers to include a few basic elements that ensure success.

- **Agendas.** A written agenda, distributed to each club member and all guests as they enter the room, should include important dates, places, and times of projects. A contact person, such as the head of that committee, should also be included.
- **Handouts.** A chart or checklist of responsibilities for activities should be given to members. This should inform individuals of duties and deadlines.
- **Fun.** Meetings should be fun to keep members coming back for more. Agendas can be "decorated" with clever sayings or cartoons. Quick ice-breakers or team-building activities can serve as business meeting intermissions. Presenting birthday surprises or award certificates to hard-working members can serve the same purpose. Serve refreshments at the beginning or end of a meeting to form social bonds. Of course, stimulating programs provide the best way to keep meetings alive. These may include guest speakers, brief demonstrations, or performances.
- **Order.** Besides using parliamentary procedure, the club may vote to elect a sergeant-at-arms from its membership. This individual is responsible for *quietly* calling individuals to task if they talk out of turn or become disruptive to the meeting's smooth flow. Some groups give their sergeant-at-arms the power to fine members a small amount; this penalty should be

stated (in writing at the start of the club year). This is one way to fund refreshments for meetings.

- **Recognition.** Member motivation can be achieved and maintained by recognizing those students who have been outstanding participants in the organization. A cupcake, certificate, or other token of appreciation is adequate. A pat on the back goes a long way.
- **Officers.** Club officers and board members often appear aloof and dictator-like to other club members. To avoid this, have officers who are not presiding over the meeting sit among the members and do their jobs from those positions.
- **Adviser.** The adviser is present at meetings, but usually in the background, speaking only when asked a question or an opinion. The club belongs to the students and should be run by them.
- **Evaluation.** Videotape or audio record a meeting to demonstrate how much time and efficiency are lost when order is not maintained. A periodic written evaluation is also a good idea. Again, a simple form can take care of this easily.

MEETING EVALUATION FORM

Date of Meeting: _____ Meeting Length: _____

Meeting Evaluators: _____

(Rate 1–5, 5 = Highest)

Clarity: _____

Precision: _____

Voice of Presiding Officer: _____

Interest of Audience: _____

Order: _____

Areas of Strength:

Areas Needing Improvement:

Specific Suggestions for the Next Meeting:

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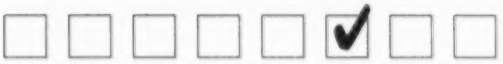

Membership

Obtaining members is relatively easy; keeping them is often difficult. In both cases, a systematic approach, a plan of attack, so to speak, is needed. For clubs that do not have a ready-made membership, these tips might be helpful in recruiting students best suited for this organization.

1. If the club has an unlimited membership and is likely to draw large numbers of students, limit that membership. This *must* be included in the club constitution to avoid problems later. It will also ensure the adviser and student officers are not overburdened with responsibilities.
2. Limited membership requires an application procedure. The application should be one page and pertinent to the club, such as:

SAMPLE CLUB APPLICATION

Applicant _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone ( ) _____ Date of Birth _____

How did you hear about the _____ Club?

What do you already know about the _____ Club?

Why do you want to be a member of the _____ Club?

What particular skills and/or talents do you have that would benefit the _____ Club?

What do you hope to gain by becoming a member of the _____ Club?

What is your definition of commitment?

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3. To ensure objectivity, the applicant should remain anonymous. Each applicant can be assigned a number, recorded by someone who is *not* involved in the application assessment. That number would fill the "Applicant" space on the application.
4. Applications should be reviewed as soon as possible as a matter of courtesy. Student leaders should select the members. If leaders have not yet been elected, a panel of teachers and students could do the selection. The adviser should remain neutral in this case and vote only to break a tie. If student leaders are voting, the adviser should not be involved except to be present (a must) and ensure objectivity.

Building and retaining membership often requires no small measure of creativity and resourcefulness, especially as a means of heading off the mid-year "blahs." If, however, the club's meetings have maintained a high and consistent degree of energy, then few problems should arise. The adviser, therefore, should ensure club officers remain fresh and energized. Pull back once in a while and observe those leaders for signs of stress. They, too, need reinforcement and encouragement-recognition in school announcements, a spotlight on a school bulletin board, or a write-up in the school newspaper.

MEMBERSHIP-BUILDING IDEAS

Many clubs hold membership drives, particularly around the end of the first semester when members may have been lost due to a drop in grades (if the club has such a requirement), school transfer,

employment obligations, parental restrictions, or even lack of interest. In this case, there are many ways to gain new members.

- **Party Time.** During lunch, before a sports event, or other school activity, or any time when potential new members are gathered, sponsor an ice cream party or a pizza party. Obtain donations for free advertising and be sure to advertise the club, too.
- **Table Tents.** Print these with club meeting information and place them on cafeteria tables, in the library or outdoor quad—wherever students congregate.
- **"Bring-a-Guest" Meetings.** After plenty of advance publicity, each member who brings a guest is recognized as is each student who signs up. Be creative—throw confetti, use noisemakers, make it a real celebration! You might even want to include a "penalty" for those club members who do not bring a guest (but don't advertise this in advance) such as standing for the whole meeting, or singing the school song.
- **Baked Ads.** During lunch, distribute soft cookies or cupcakes, each topped with a flag on a toothpick announcing the club's name and meeting information. Members can bake these at a group baking party held at someone's home, the school cafeteria kitchen, or in the home economics kitchen.
- **Displays.** Place a display wherever students gather. Be sure it has pizzazz—bright colors, a video of activities, the club scrapbook, colorful flyers, a photo board.
- **Bookmarks.** Make attractive, eye-catching club information bookmarks, printed and laminated by the school, for free distribution in the library or English classes.
- **Bookcovers.** If the club has money to invest or a cooperative graphic arts department, club bookcovers can be made and distributed. (This is also a good fundraiser.)
- **Assemblies.** Try to take a few moments during a school assembly program for a humorous skit about clubs.
- **Interclub Cooperation.** Join other on-campus groups to sponsor a dance or carnival. Set up a club recruiting station at one of these events. This is a good opportunity for cementing bonds between clubs and providing good public relations.
- **Tried and True Means.** Let's not forget those reliable school posters and hand-distributed flyers. Of course, personal contact is still the best method of gaining new club members—people recruiting people.

INTERNAL PUBLIC RELATIONS TIP

There is no doubt that the cooperation of the school administration is necessary for club success. When asking the administration for assistance, such as during membership drives, have a clean-up plan ready as well as a justification for the activity. An effort to use recyclable materials whenever possible is also impressive.

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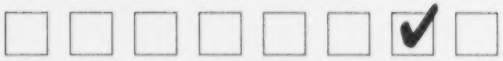

Planning

PLANNING THE SCHOOL YEAR

No one can tell an adviser how to plan the club's school year since each club operates differently. It is imperative, however, that each adviser have a plan.

Most schools maintain a master activities calendar for all school clubs, teams, and special events. Some schools establish this schedule in the fall, some do it the previous spring, and some revise it on a monthly basis. It is the adviser's responsibility to know the system and work within it. That way, the club avoids earning a negative reputation.

The usual activities that appear on the master calendar include, but are not limited to:

- fundraisers
- dances
- assemblies
- blood drives
- carnivals
- ecology/environment projects
- performances
- school vacations
- sports events
- SAT/ACT testing days
- holidays (local and national).

At the beginning of the year, this plan should be presented to the school administration for approval and placement on the school

calendar. For that presentation, the adviser should be ready with the following:

1. Target date for completion and at least one alternate date
2. Alternate project
3. Written justification for the activity
4. Manpower plan
5. Set-up and clean-up plan
6. Individual project timelines
7. Chaperone/security requirements (if any)
8. Budget estimates.

In short, this is a portfolio for the year, which saves much work later on. The portfolio can be duplicated and given to each officer and board member—even to each club member. It can also serve as a quick and easy reference manual for the adviser to maintain organization and improve time management. Of course, smaller or spontaneous events can be added as they are needed. Keep in mind that clubs should not plan more activities than they can handle effectively. Meet with club officers to set priorities, which teaches a skill student leaders should learn as soon as possible.

PLANNING PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES

Projects that fail usually do so because of poor planning. Good planning includes developing:

- timelines
- work assignments
- task lists
- contingency plans
- budgets
- correspondence.

All this should be placed on a chart with room to check off items as they are completed. The nature of the chart will, of course, be determined by the nature of the activity. To facilitate the learning experience of student leaders, however, the same type of chart should be used for each project. Post the chart on a bulletin board or above a work table for easy access. One type of chart that works well is the PERT (Programming, Evaluation, Review Technique) Chart. This

system calls for each item or task to be recorded on a slip of paper, then arranged according to priority. The greatest advantage of this system is that it allows for both long-range and last-minute changes with a vision of the whole project at a glance. Potential problems can also be easily spotted and, therefore, solved well in advance of the activity. Also, since a number of people can view and assess the chart at one time, accuracy is improved.

This system also provides for an important element of project planning: evaluation. Not only should each step of the planning process be evaluated, but also the completed project. A simple form can be designed for this purpose.

PROJECT EVALUATION

Name of Project: _____

Date of Project: _____

Project Assessment Team (Name and Position): _____

_____

_____

Rating (1–5, 5 = highest):

Project Leadership _____

Club Participation _____

Communication _____

Goal(s) Reached _____

Overall Effectiveness _____

What specific positive comments can we make about this project?

Should this project be repeated? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What specific suggestions can we offer for the improvement of projects in the future?

Have we followed through on all our acknowledgments and appreciation?

Additional Comments: _____

_____

_____

Keep it short; keep it simple. Most of all, keep a notebook of completed evaluation forms and use them in future planning. It is also wise for the adviser to be present during evaluation sessions to ensure "personalities" do not become an issue. The adviser's presence should ensure objectivity.

PROJECT DAY

There is little to say about project day. If it was efficient, all will go smoothly. Right? Right! There are, however, a few tips to offer at this point.

1. Double check everything. Assume nothing.
2. Don't forget—the adviser is a role model for punctuality, dedication, and commitment.
3. All club representatives should smile. They represent the club, and "You never get a second chance to make a first impression."
4. Project a positive attitude. It's catching!
5. Enjoy yourself. You have earned it!

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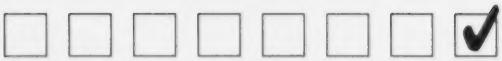

Gaining Support for Your Club

THE ADMINISTRATION

It is a fact of life that no club is going to fare well without the support of the school administration. It is also a fact of life that the adviser is the sole individual responsible for gaining or losing that support because, ultimately, the adviser, as the adult leader, is responsible for the behavior, demeanor, and activities of that club.

I don't think one needs to enumerate the disciplinarian responsibilities of the teacher/adviser here. A mere recognition of the fact that the teacher/adviser is responsible for maintaining order and proper decorum should suffice. Beyond that, however, how does one gain and maintain administrative support?

To gain and maintain administrative support, try these tips.

1. Make sure all group activities are within the guidelines of the school. If any seem controversial or doubtful, take the time to check. Often, a simple question will supply the answer.
2. Do not try to circumvent school rules. It is the adviser's job to ensure that club members know the rules, understand them, and abide by them.
3. Print positive publicity about club projects. Distribute press releases to the school newspaper, local newspapers, even television or radio stations. Always mention the name of the school and its principal.

4. Follow through on all business associated with the club. Return phone calls and maintain correspondence to avoid negative repercussions from parents or others in the school or community.
5. Maintain a professional demeanor whether dealing with students, parents, school staff, or community leaders. Remember, you reflect the school.
6. Invite administrators to club functions, making sure to provide sufficient notice and *exact* information. A written invitation is always impressive, especially one hand-delivered by a club member. The administrator will know that you're behind the invitation and are serving as a good role model for social behavior for your students.
7. For any club activity, especially those held on campus, be sure to arrange a clean-up committee. Take down outdated posters from the school's hallways, remove trash to the designated trash collection areas, return furniture and other equipment to their original locations.
8. Smile.

TEACHERS

A common problem for many advisers is gaining support for their activities from other staff members. The most important factor here is courtesy. If the adviser or a student representative from the club approaches a faculty member to chaperone a dance, buy a fundraising item, or give up his or her classroom for a day's event, and that individual refuses, a polite and smiling "Thank you" is in order. Only that individual knows his or her time constraints and commitments, as well as financial status and habits. There are, however, other ways to garner as much active and word-of-mouth support as possible.

1. Whenever asking a fellow teacher for a "favor," give plenty of advance notice, as well as a complete explanation of what is expected of that person.
2. Invite fellow teachers to be *guests* at events, such as picnics or carnivals. You may even offer them a free car wash at your next such fundraising event. It's a nice way to say, "Thank you for your support."
3. Willingly share ideas, advice, and plans with teachers who also

serve as club advisers. Perhaps your club could invite them to a "Welcome to the New School Year" celebration in your classroom before or after school. Make them feel special. They are. Like you, they are giving their time to students.

4. Invite other clubs to hold joint activities with yours. This could improve the quality of the activity, lessen the individual work loads, and cement supportive relationships.
5. Maintain a professional and friendly demeanor. Let others know what your club is doing, but don't play "one-upmanship." That defeats the purpose of education.
6. Smile.

The adviser may decide to gain the support of administrators and faculty personally, or elect to place most of these suggestions in the hands of club officers. In either case, remember that the good name of the organization is at stake. If students are the goodwill ambassadors, then the adviser should teach them how to do their job well.

Closing Note of Inspiration

- **S** SUPPORT
- **U** UNDERSTANDING
- **C** CREATIVITY
- **C** COMMUNICATION
- **E** EDUCATION
- **S** SUGGESTION
- **S** SMILE
- **F** FRIENDLINESS
- **U** UBIQUITOUSNESS
- **L** LEVITY

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